

1993

## Briefing Book: National Endowment for the Arts (1994): Speech 23

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**TALKING POINTS  
CREATIVE TIME**

**September 10, 1993**

**QUESTION: What is Accountability?**

**ANSWER: Accountability** is a poster and postcard work by artist Dinh Le which was mounted in various locations in New York City and exhibited last year at "Here and Now, Now and Then" at the Bronx Council on the Arts. The content of the work appears to address the United States' role in the Vietnam War (see attached article).

**QUESTION: Did the Arts Endowment support Accountability?**

**ANSWER:** The Endowment awarded a \$45,000 grant in 1992 to Creative Time in New York for its visual art programs which included three series. The series included "Art in the Anchorage," "Winter Garden," (both described below), and the "CityWide" project which supported several artists' projects, including Dinh Le's Accountability. A fraction of the Endowment grant went to this particular project.

**QUESTION: Is the Endowment the sole sponsor of this project?**

**ANSWER:** Not at all. As with most Endowment grants, this grant required matching money. This Endowment grant was technically matched four to one with non-federal sources, but a total of 21 other organizations, including Chase Manhattan Bank, ConEdison, and Cowles Charitable Trust, contributed to the Accountability project.

**QUESTION: Is the National Endowment for the Arts supporting certain political positions or opinions about the Vietnam War?**

**ANSWER:** No. The National Endowment for the Arts encourages creation of, presentation of, preservation of, and education about art, and makes decisions on the excellence of art programs. It does not make decisions based on political or religious beliefs or what, if any, of those beliefs will be reflected in artwork.

**-more-**

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**QUESTION:** Tell me more about what the Endowment meant to do by awarding \$45,000 of taxpayer money to Creative Time.

**ANSWER:** This grant supported programs including: the "CityWide Series," artists projects at public locations; "Art in the Anchorage," installations and performances presented in the chambers beneath the Brooklyn Bridge; and visual and interdisciplinary projects presented in the "Winter Garden" series in Battery Park City -- all in order to bring about better understanding of contemporary art to the public. Most of the projects are presented in a public way, much like the Accountability? poster series. Another example is the CityWide's project during which artist Jerri Allyn produced "Mass Transit," a billboard and postcard work about public transportation, as part of a collaboration with the New York City Metropolitan Transit Authority.

**QUESTION:** Why does the Endowment fund these kinds of organizations?

**ANSWER:** This grant came from the Endowment's Visual Arts Program's "Visual Artists Organizations" grant category. Representing 1% of the total Endowment budget, this category helps support programming by artist-run organizations which present contemporary American artwork to the U.S. public. The amount of money the Endowment spends on the category is a minute, but important part of financial resources for contemporary art presentation in this country -- important because of its support for community-based organizations, which have limited sources of funding. Many communities strongly desire and support these organizations, but they need additional support. The Galveston Art Center in Galveston, Texas, Contemporary Art Center in Seattle, Second Street Gallery in Charlottesville, Virginia, and the Bemis Foundation in Omaha, Nebraska are examples. They are all supported first and foremost by local funds, and assisted by the Arts Endowment.

Attachment: New York Newsday article, 12/8/92.